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ABSTRACT

This monthlong interdisciplinary, award winning project was designed to help kindergarten children in Kentucky understand basic economic principles that affect their daily lives. The children study about the poverty-stricken people of the Appalachian mountain area of the state. Through the operation of a classroom coal mine and company store, the children learn that Kentucky is the major coal producing state in the country. They develop an understanding of many basic economic principles, including scarcity, goods and services, and opportunity cost. They form their own business, called the Kentucky Kinder Crafts, and, as the people of Appalachia have for decades, use resources at hand to produce unique items and then sell them to the general public. Other project activities involve students in viewing filmstrips and films, working in learning centers, listening to stories and guest speakers, and putting on an Appalachian folk festival. Project evaluation reveals that students increase their knowledge of basic economic concepts as a result of this project. Print and nonprint project resources are listed. (RM)

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MOMMY, BUY ME A CHINA DOLL

A Kindergarten Economics Project

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INTRODUCTION

Last summer, I discovered a wonderful little book, Mommy Buy Me A China Doll, in an Appalachian book store in Berea, Kentucky. "Mommy, buy me . . . ". Are there any three words used more frequently by our young, TV-sales-oriented children of today? Suddenly, I had an exciting new idea for an economic study to use with my two kindergarten classes in the fall.

With the economy tightening all around us, inflation running rampant, and all of us caught in the squeeze, most "mommies" and "daddies" are finding it increasingly difficult to buy even dire necessities. What more opportune time than now for every five-year old to learn about scarcity and having to make choices!

Could I help my kindergartners understand basic economic principles that affect their daily lives by learning about the poverty-stricken people who settled, and still live, in the Appalachian mountain area of our state of Kentucky? I could, and we did! By integrating a study of Appalachian natur l resources, music, crafts, stories, art and history, we compared their lives to ours today.

Through the operation of a classroom coal mine and company store, we learned that Kentucky is the major coal producing state in our country. Many basic economic principles were learned here, and in the formation in the spring of our own business, Kentucky Kinder Crafts. We "became" the people of Appalachia, using resources at hand to produce unique items that could be sold to the general public and create income for an economically destitute segment of our society.

The Appendix, in the form of a scrapbook, is of utmost importance in

furthering the understanding of this project. It contains pictures, games and activities that clarify much of the text.

PLAN OF STUDY

Kindergarten is the first step on the public school ladder to academic fulfillment. The concept of scarcity is the fundamental building block of the discipline of economics.

To help five-year olds begin to think effectively and to understand and grasp basic economic generalizations, it is important at this early age to have a consciously planned program. This program should capture their immediate attention, involve them actively in the processes of learning, and include a wide variety of learning activities to reach each and every child in the way he or she learns best.

Young children learn most effectively through concrete examples and sensory -filled experiences, in which they touch, smell, hear and see objects at hand. They also achieve understanding by acting out, or role-playing, thoughts, feelings, stories and poetry about concepts or experiences.

Our plan of study included making pictures, posters, bulletin boards and collages to see what we were learning. We listened to books and newspapers being read. We saw and heard films, film strips and records. We had several resource people work with us in our classroom.

We actually worked in a classroom coal mine, where we saw and smelled the coal dust and felt the fatigue of a miner digging coal. We used resources at hand to produce various products to be sold in our own classroom business.

Enthusiasm reigned high in my two kindergarten classes each day,

which included twenty-five students in the morning and twenty-five others in the afternoon. Each child was involved actively and totally in learning experiences that will serve as building blocks to future understanding of our land, our people, and our economy.

Because of the high economic near-illiteracy that prevails among Americans today, it was important to involve the parents and families of our students in all our activities. I hoped to motivate them to continue exposing and explaining economic principles to their children in their everyday experiences together.

GOALS OF THE STUDY

The following specific goals were incorporated in the project:

1. To help children understand that because income of a household is limited and its wants for goods and services are unlimited, it must choose which goods and services will be consumed . . . Problem of Scarcity.

2. To make wise decisions in goods purchased because whenever they buy a particular good, they must give up some other good . . Opportunity Cost.

3. It takes raw materials (natural resources), people (labor) and tools (capital) to produce goods and services which satisfy our wants and needs . . . Productive Resources.

4. To concentrate our study on the production of coal, the most important natural resource to the economy of our state of Kentucky. (Kentucky Kinder Coal Co.)

5. To learn that decisions must be made as to what goods and services are to be produced with available resources.

6. To create and operate a classroom business (Kentucky Kinder Craft Co.) using available resources.

7. To learn that labor income is the main source of income for most households.

8. To involve students and parents in activities designed to develop their critical-thinking skills.

BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

Thanksgiving and Christmas holidays were behind us, and January seemed to be the perfect time to introduce a stimulating, new study of our neighbors in the Appalachian mountains of Kentucky, and to strive for further understanding of basic economic principles, so important in each of our lives.

During the first six weeks of school in the fall, the children had been introduced to economic terms, such as: "wants and needs", "goods and services", "consumers and producers". The basic curriculum of these first weeks of almost every kindergarten in this country serves as the perfect foil to introduce a few basic economic principles that relate to the children's real-life experiences, and are at their level of understanding. Very briefly this basic curriculum includes:

First Week - All About Me
This is a completely child-centered week of activities that teach "There's Nobody Just Like Me." During this week we examine the likes and differences in people and how each of us has different wants and needs.

Second Week - Friends
We extend our study of self to our families and other people familiar and important to the children, and direct attention to the child's peers. We continue with the very elementary economic concept of differences in our friends and families and in their wants and needs.

Third Week - Animals Are Our Friends
We identify our animal friends, their physical features, and how they provide food and clothing (basic needs) for man. We compare and contrast foods eaten by man and animals. We examine the concept of whether man's wants and needs are different from an animal's wants and needs.

Fourth Week- Homes Lived In By People and Animals
Introduce very elementary explanation of natural resources . . . what, why, and how animals and man select and use these resources in building their homes.

Fifth Week - Our Town - Jeffersontown

Develop concept of our own town. Who lives there? Do people work there? What kind of work do people do there? What kind of businesses exist there? What type of work are members of the children's families engaged in? Why do people work? Anyone who does useful work is called a producer. Who do you know who is a producer? Are you a producer? When?

People earn wages or money when they work. What do people do with the money they earn in their jobs?

Learn what goods are. Open three pretend businesses: grocery store, clothing store and bakery. Children use play money from Liberty Money Machine to buy goods purchased. (See page 39 or scrapbook.)

Learn who the community helpers are in our school and town. Learn what services they perform. Involve children through dramatic play in assuming roles of community helpers.

Invite community helpers and parents to speak to children about their jobs, and let children decide if they provide goods or services in their work.

Learn that everyone who uses goods and services is a consumer. Learn that we are all consumers.

During this period we learn that we must pay for goods and services, and that people earn income in their jobs in order to buy goods and services

Introduce the basic concept that scarcity exists in our society, and there are not enough resources to satisfy everyone's wants and needs.

Sixth Week - All About Fall

Study how our needs and wants change in relation to the fall season. (clothing, activities, caring for our environment, and how and where we get our food)

This introductory period included the necessary background, and acted as a springboard to our challenging Appalachian project that we began in January!

THE STUDY

We began our study with a delightful book, Mommy, Buy Me A China Doll, by Harve and Margot Zemach. This is the story of Eliza Lou, a little girl who lives in the mountains. One autumn day she meets a mountain trader pulling a wagon piled high with cloth and kettles and . . . a china doll. Her family doesn't have money for china dolls, but Eliza Lou has that problem solved. She suggests to her mother that they trade her daddy's featherbed for it, but this poses a new problem: Where will her daddy sleep? As she sits on her mother's lap, Eliza Lou suggests alternative sleeping arrangements for the entire family, and their horses, kittens, chickens and pigs.

This is a humorous adaptation of an old mountain folk song, and the children were immediately enraptured with the earthy, homespun illustrations of Eliza Lou's fantasies, and were soon singing the little refrain . . . "Mommy, buy me a china doll. Do, Mommy, do!", which reoccurs throughout the story.

With enthusiasm at a peak, the children were asked to think of reasons why Eliza Lou's family did not have enough money to buy her a china doll. Do some families have less money than other families? Do families have to make choices in what they buy? This led to a review of what our wants and needs are. The children cut out pictures from magazines and catalogs and used scissors and paste to make a "We Need" collage. The next day they made an "I Want" collage. (See scrapbook, pages 2, 3, and 4.)

Their instructions then were to take these two papers home, and discuss their wants and needs with their families. Each child was to

arrive at a decision with their own families and use crayon to place a large circle around the objects actually needed by the family. Then they were to discuss the "I Want" page, and make a choice together of the one thing the child wanted the most, and that the family could afford to buy.

The children returned these papers to school the next day, and we compared the decisions of different children and their families. At this point, it was possible to discuss scarcity in terms of individual or family wants, limited family income, and family choice making. We talked about the children's preponderance of pictures of things they "wanted", and how money must be paid for these goods and services. (This concept had been introduced in the fall with our classroom pretend businesses).

Some children were able to tell that they had to think about how much money their mother or father (or both) "made", in order to make their choices. At least four or five children volunteered the information that the price of the article also entered into their selection.

Of course, the concept of opportunity cost entered here, and although the terminology is difficult for kindergartners to assimilate, they are very capable of understanding the theory of the other goods and services their families gave up buying, because of their limited money income.

The next day, a mother of one little boy brought in a beautiful, antique china doll and told us its' history, and of how the dolls were treasured by children many years ago. A china doll was expensive, and a family would need to consider its' needs and wants carefully before they could buy one.

I told the children that we could understand a lot more about Eliza Lou and her family's wants and needs, if we learned about where they had lived in a special area of our own state of Kentucky, the Appalachian Mountain region. I borrowed an enormous relief map of the United States from an upper grade, and the children were able to trace with their fingers the path taken by Daniel Boone and other early settlers from the east coast, through Cumberland Gap, to the hills and hollows of southeastern Kentucky. By feeling the raised parts of the map, they learned the southern Appalachian mountains range through six other states too.

We talked about what essential household goods and tools these people might have brought with them on the long trip by foot, wagon and horseback.

This led to a critical thinking stage in our discussion of what the settlers found when they arrived. Were there homes to move into? No. Were there stores in which to purchase food, tools, clothing? No. What did they have to do to exist?

We were now ready, on a very simplified elementary level, to learn about productive resources. It seemed essential to spend several days learning the tremendous importance of natural resources to the input to production. In this study, I was extremely pleased to find that by the end of the week, most of my kindergarten students were able to understand that natural resources were the gifts of nature the early settlers found, awaiting their use for survival in the mountains. I wanted the children to understand that land, along with its natural resources, has provided the base for obtaining food, shelter, clothing and other fundamental needs, that have sustained and made life more comfortable from prehistoric

time to the present.

What amazing answers I received from my students when I first asked the question, "What is land?"

"It's a playground!"

"It's where we dig holes."

"Our house sits on it."

"It's at the airport!"

We looked at pictures of land, water, oil, sun, rain (for suitable climate for growing crops), timber, soil, and mineral deposits, with a heavy concentration on coal.

The children in my classroom work in learning centers for about one hour each session, and participated in various readiness activities concerning natural resources in the language arts, math, science, art and block building centers. These activities included:

1. Drew pictures of natural resources found in Appalachian Mountains. (See scrapbook, page 12.)

2. Natural resource display in science center contained soil samples, wood from various types of trees, water, oil, and coal. The students:
   a. Arranged soil samples according to color from lightest to darkest. (To associate with fertili' /)
   b. Arranged pieces of wood from shortest to longest, largest to smallest, etc.
   c. Explored liquid measure with water and metric containers.
   d. Used individual centimeter rulers to measure length of pieces of wood.

3. Worked with families at home to find articles about coal or Kentucky in the daily newspapers, and brought these articles to school to make collages. This was to emphasize the importance of our daily newspaper and also part of our phonetic training in learning the similarity of the beginning consonant sounds of the letters Cc and Kk. (See scrapbook, page 14.)

4. Made torn paper pictures with construction paper and paste to show mountain scenes with at least three natural resources in the picture. (See scrapbook, pages 16 and 18.)

5. These pictures were used to decorate the classroom and, also, as part of a huge bulletin board in the front hall of our school. It was titled Natural Resources of Appalachia. In this way, the bulletin board became a learning center for our entire school of over seven hundred students. (See scrapbook, page 10.)

6. Planted corn and wheat seeds in fertile soil in mammoth-sized mayonaise jars to understand how the early people used the soil to produce food to sustain life.

7. Built log houses in the block and building center to help understand how the settlers had felled the timber to make logs to build homes for their shelter.

Other activities included: film strips, stories and a game to learn about scarcity called "Musical Goods and Services." (Directions in scrapbook, page 6.) This game is based on the familiar "Musical Chairs" and teaches how resources are limited.

What better time than now for my students and their families to learn that Kentucky is the nation's number one coal-producing state. Coal is the state's largest industry, grossing three billion dollars per year. Every edition of our two local daily newspapers, The Courier-Journal and The Louisville Times, contain articles about the coal industry, or coal-related topics. It is said that Kentucky is on the eve of a coal revolution . . . a boom unlike any in its past. The boom has its roots in the beginnings of a world-wide conversion from oil and natural gas to coal.

How could my students begin to better understand this all-important natural resource to the economy of our state? We "constructed" a coal mine in a darkened corner of our classroom. This required many trips hauling coal in boxes in my car from a local coal yard. A long table was draped and placed inside the darkened mine, with coal piled high on top of and under it.

The mine became the Kentucky Kinder Coal Company. A large packing box

outside the mine served as the mine shaft. Each child became a coal miner by pulling on overalls, wearing a miner's hard hat, and climbing into the conveyor car inside the mine shaft box. With lantern and flashlight in hand, the child pretended he/she was descending for underground to the mine entrance. It was amazing how long some children sat in the car in the shaft! They were thoroughly convinced our mine was very deep down in the mountain.

Each miner's job was to enter the mine and shovel coal into a basket. It was truly dark in the mine, and the child could only see with the light from the flashlight. The miner brought the basket filled with coal out of the mine and took it to the Company Store. Girls and boys alike eagerly awaited their turn to work in the mine. Of course this took several days to accomplish during our center time. (See scrapbook, pages 19, 20 and 21.)

Many interesting comments were made by the miners as they came out of the mine.

"Gosh, that was really hard work."

"It was so dark in there."

"I had trouble finding the shovel!"

"That coal is too heavy!"

Two children worked in the Company Store each day. Their job was to use a scale and weigh five pounds of coal. This took a great deal of exchanging larger and smaller lumps of coal to obtain exactly five pounds. Then the coal was bagged and ready for delivery to our customers.

We had previously discussed the best way to market our product. We advertised the opening of our coal company by sending fliers home to parents. (See scrapbook, page 22.) We must have had a real bargain,

because we were overwhelmed by our orders! What a sight to see five-year olds struggling onto the school bus with their bags of coal to deliver to families and neighbors! (The teacher did exert strong influence in the pricing of the coal, because I didn't want even one lump of coal left to haul back out of the building!)

Our coal mine operation helped us begin to understand how the production of most goods involves the use of a combination of resources, with these resources being classified as Natural, Human and Capital. We watched a film entitled, Frank Jackson: Coal Miner, that enlarged our mental image of the job of a miner in a real Appalachian coal mine. This furthered understanding of the importance of human labor in producing goods and services from resources.

We also learned the necessity of the capital goods we had used to help produce and sell our product. These included our shovel, basket, flashlight, lantern, company store building, scale, box, bags , cash register, and so forth. We played the following game to help understand the importance of capital goods in the production of resources:

Game: We Like to Mine the Coal
(Sing to the tune of "The Farmer in the Dell")

Directions: Play just as in traditional game. Children form circle facing inward. Miner is in center of circle. As they sing, substitute names of capital goods that the mine or the company store might invest in. Children act out use of various tools and capital goods as they sing.

"We like to mine the coal, we like to mine the coal,
Hi, ho the derry-o, we like to mine the coal!

But we need some capital, yes, we need some capital,
Oh, we need some capital, so that we can mine the coal.

First we bought a shovel, first we bought a shovel,
First we bought a shovel, so we could mine the coal.

The game may be changed to capital goods needed in company store. For example:

"We work at the company store, we work at the company store,
But we will need some capital to work at the company store.

First we bought a scale, first we bought a scale,
First we bought a scale to work at the company store."

Our school custodian is the widow of a former coal miner. She visited our classroom and told about life in the mountains of Kentucky, and very briefly touched on the dangers inherent in working in the mines.

This was all a highly successful venture! The children really learned as the coal dust flew! Fortunately I had a student teacher and an aide present during this operation to help remove coal dust from eager little hands and faces. (See scrapbook, pages 23 and 24.) Teachers from all over our school brought their classes to see the mine and store in operation.

How thrilled we were to have the largest newspaper in the state, The Courier-Journal, run a feature article, "Youngsters 'Mine' Coal and Concepts", in the financial section (Marketplace) of the Sunday paper. (See scrapbook, page 26.)

Parents, teachers from other schools, and administrators from our school system arrived to see the Kentucky Kinder Coal Co. in action. (See letters in scrapbook, pages 41 and 42.)

As soon as the coal dust settled, and we had closed and cleaned all vestiges of our mine operation, we continued our study of the people of Appalachia, their customs, beliefs and economy. We had already begun learning a great many folk songs from the mountains. I accompanied their singing with a unique musical instrument, the mountain dulcimer, made by the people in the lonely hills and hollows to entertain themselves. Of

course, this demonstrated another product produced from their timber resources.

The concept of a family living isolated from the world with very little income, no television set, very few books or newspapers, and a need for self-entertainment, was further stressed by a father of one of our boys, who visited our classroom. He had grown up in the mountains and is a great story-teller. He held the children spellbound with tales of 'coon hunts and 'possums and the down-to-earth people of the Appalachians.

One of the mothers came to class and demonstrated how she mills her own flour, and we baked yeast rolls and spread them with butter and honey for a tasty, self-produced treat at snack time. This further extended our study of the wheat we had planted, and what happens when the kernels of wheat are ground into flour.

Our science center had a display of the wheat growing in jars, the kernels removed from the stalks, the bran that is removed at the mill, and the resultant product of flour. The students tried grinding or smashing the kernsl with rocks to obtain the flour inside, and we decided as a class that the capital goods of a flour mill greatly ease the production of flour.

We used an old-fashioned churn one day and made butter. This extended our knowledge of how the animals on the small, poor, mountain farms were an invaluable resource for food and other products.

The children listened to the story of Pelle's New Suit, and followed the step-by-step process of the boy, who sheared his lamb and traded his services for the services of others who card, spin, dye, weave and sew the wool into a new suit. This is a wonderful book that helps discuss

factors of production, specialization, interdependence and, of course, barter. At this time, we made a field trip to the North American Livestock Exhibition at Freedom Hall in Louisville. We saw many different breeds of sheep, felt the wool that had just been shorn, and watched a demonstration of the entire process of spinning the lamb's wool into yarn.

The next day at school, we began making our own rather crude weavings on cardboard looms, using sticks from trees at the top, and interweaving strips of material, yarn, corn husks, reeds from plants, or whatever we had or could find in our neighborhoods as resources.

We looked at other products made today by the Appalachian people and discussed their resource origins. This included: corn-husk dolls, corncob animals and pipes, limber jacks and other wooden toys, quilts, woven bedspreads, apple granny dolls, baskets, and so forth. (Scrapbook, page 27.)

This led us into a discussion of how few jobs there are available to mountain people, outside of those in the coal mines and lumber companies. Poverty in Appalachia is notorious. Our old friend, Eliza Lou, and her family chose to live in the mountains away from crowds of people, where they could have some land all their own, and enjoy space all around them. We likened their feelings for independence with those of the Pilgrims who came to the New World.

In order to live in the mountains, these people gave up the opportunity to make much money. Over the years, many people have left to find jobs other places. However, many mountain people have now found a new source of income. Organizations like the Southern Highland Handicraft Guild have contributed to a renaissance of crafts in the mountains and elsewhere, by helping to market handmade products.

Mountain people already knew how to turn raw materials into finished

objects of beauty. Now there were people from all over the United States who wanted to buy their products.

After learning that mountain children are taught to make many of these crafts, my kindergartners decided it would be fun to open our own craft shop. This was the beginning of Kentucky Kinder Crafts in a large corner of our classroom. In order to be like the Appalachian people, we understood we must use whatever raw materials were available and on hand. Parents were informed of our plan, and we received many contributions of fabric scraps. Several mothers came in during center time to work one-on-one with the children on needle work projects.

The children loved every minute of this project! Every girl and boy made either a quilted pillow, a doll bed coverlet, or an animal bean bag. Several children made two items. Even our most immature students, with the poorest hand-eye coordination, worked diligently to sew every stitch and stuff and yarn-tie their little pillow. Children hung through the windows of the little craft shop eagerly awaiting their turn to sew. (See scrapbook, page 28.)

One day we made candles by melting our old crayon stubs and pouring them into greased muffin tins. The children also made a few corncob animals and dried apples for heads for dolls.

During March, we were also learning about money. Our math center was captioned "There's Money In Our Mountains", and the students used several learning activities designed to help them identify the coins used in our monetary system. One activity was a mountain scene with a construction paper log cabin that depicted the various combinations of coins that add up to one dollar. The door was a dollar bill. The roof contained one hundred pennies. Each of the four panes of the window

contained a quarter. The chimney was lined with ten dimes. The top of the tree beside the cabin was filled with twenty nickles. The smoke puffs from the chimney were two half dollars.

Another game was called "Deposit Your Money In The Bank". The children used very realistic coins (from Developmental Learning Materials) and sorted the quarters into a holder marked 25¢, the dimes into a holder marked 10¢, and so on.

In April, Phyllis George Brown, the wife of the Governor of Kentucky, was scheduled to speak to the upper grade students in our school about a state-wide contest she and the Governor were sponsoring. Members of her staff arrived early to make the necessary arrangements for her appearance. They just happened to see and hear about our Kentucky Kinder Crafts, and immediately asked if she could visit our classroom after her talk. One of Mrs. Brown's main interests is in promoting Kentucky crafts, and she was extremely interested in the children's work. How proudly the children showed her their handicrafts! It was interesting to note that the very next week, she and the Governor were in New York promoting the opening of a Kentucky craft shop at Bloomingdales Department Store. (See scrapbook, pages 29 and 30.)

The culmination of our month of work was to invite families and friends of the children, and the first and second grades of our school, to attend a mountain folk festival all our own. The children wore "old-time" costumes to sing mountain ballads and perform line and circle dances in the auditorium of the school. They used puppets to enact an old Appalachian song called "The Black Duck". We had made these puppets as a group project. The Berea College Puppetry Caravan holds workshops all over the

United States during the summer. They give instruction in making marionettes and puppets from resources at hand, such as paper bags, scrap paper and fabric.

After our program, the families were invited to attend the grand opening of the Kentucky Kinder Craft Shop in our classroom. Our products included animal bean bags, quilted pillows, doll bed quilts, weavings, corncob animals, clay pots and candles. They were individually priced and simply and beautifully displayed with each child's name on his/her creations.

A check-out table with two toy cash registers (in best super-market style) was at the far end of the room. Two students manned each register. We had studied the various combinations of coins required for the prices on our products. Examples of coin combinations were beside each register to help the cashiers.

Every child was assigned a specific place to work and help customers. Some sold pillows, some bean bags, some candles. We all knew what excellent producers we were, and, at long last our customers, the consumers, had arrived to buy our products.

The children were fantastic! They took their jobs very seriously, and parents were enthusiastic, helpful and patient in the long check-out lines. The Jeffersonian, another local newspaper, covered these events with a terrific picture and story. (Scrapbook, page 34.)

Several parents made appreciative comments to me on how much their children had learned in our economic study. One father, who is a university professor, told me his child not only had brought home the economic concepts we were learning, but had begun to ask him questions about marketing, distribution and pricing of products that he was hard-

pressed to answer at times.

A mother wrote me later, "Leigh is using terms and discussing economic activities that I don't always understand. But I'm learning!"

What greater reward for me than to look around the classroom that day and see stimulated, enthusiastic children and parents and teachers, who had all worked together, learned together, and found that economics in the classroom can be the most exciting thing happening in education today!

END RESULTS AND

EVALUATION

On the day following our festival, each class sat in a large circle on the floor and counted the money from our sale of crafts. The children had reaped a substantial profit! Opportunity cost entered our study again as the students voted whether to spend their hard-earned cash on a trip to the Museum of History and Science or the Louisville Zoological Gardens. The zoo won hands down, and the children could even afford a ride on the train all around the zoo grounds!

The enthusiasm on this particular day had been prevalent throughout our economic study. I was gratified to see the tremendous growth in social development of all the children, especially in working in small groups operating the Company Store, the coal mine, and the craft business. Best of all, the development of cognitive skills was evident as each day the children were learning to think about a problem, ask questions, and arrive at decisions. Behavior problems disappeared because the children were stimulated, involved and busy!

The best method I have found for evaluating kindergarten children is by direct observation of the children in their various activities, by questions and answers in small group and individual discussions, and by listening to their conversations with other children as they work in learning centers, at snack time and on the playground. Vocabularies increased, and it was exciting to hear many of the children use at least three or four new economic terms with their peers, showing they had a basic understanding of the concepts we had studied.

Since most of my students are non-readers, I devised a simple oral

test that I gave each child in May to help me see the progress the class had made as a whole. I showed each child individually three pictures at a time and asked her/him to select the one picture that best answered the question:

1. Which picture shows something that you really need?
   Pictures: food, a yo-yo, a balloon

2. Which picture shows something your family really needs?
   Pictures: ice skates, a house, trip to movie theatre

3. Which picture shows something you don't really need, but that you might want?
   Pictures: dog, shoes, fruit

4. Which picture shows a natural resource the mountain people need to grow corn?
   Pictures: cow, barn, soil

5. Which picture shows a person who is a producer of goods that you might buy?
   Pictures: Baker with loaf of bread, airplane pilot, policeman

6. Which picture shows a person producing a service you might need?
   Pictures: farmer with basket of vegetables, auto factory worker, firefighter

7. Which picture shows a consumer?
   Pictures: girl eating breakfast, bird nest, clouds

8. Which picture shows something the coal miner uses that would be called his Capital goods?
   Pictures: sun, shovel, pig

9. When we operated our craft shop, we hoped to have money left over after our expenses were paid. What was this called:
   Answer: profit or advertising

10. Can each of us have everything we want or need?

    Answer: yes or no

Overall results of this test revealed the students had increased their knowledge of basic economic concepts. At least nine-tenths of the stu-

dents scored eight to ten correct answers.

It is of vital importance to begin the study of economic generalizations in kindergarten. If we are to raise the E. Q. (Economic Quotient) of the American public, we must begin with our five-year olds, and each year thereafter provide new experiences and new understandings of the world around us, and of how each of us fits into the economic system of our family, our town, and our country!

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